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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DUBLIN 000251

SENSITIVE  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2018  
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [EI](#)  
SUBJECT: IRELAND AIMS TO ACHIEVE AN ANTI-CLUSTER MUNITIONS  
CONVENTION

REF: STATE 47101

Classified By: DCM Robert J. Faucher; Reasons 1.4 (B) and (d).

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Summary  
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¶1. (C) Irish Department of Foreign Affairs Political Director Rory Montgomery firmly told the Embassy May 6 that the May 19-30 Dublin Conference will produce a final Cluster Munitions Convention, ready for signature in Oslo in December 2008. Montgomery agreed that interoperability and definitions would constitute the crux of the Conference negotiations, saying that Ireland would work to expand the language of Articles 1(b) and 1(c) so as to diminish the chance of unintended consequences. Deleting the paragraphs, however, was out of the question, he stated. He also said that Ireland would seek to achieve compromises in the language of the text so as to not disrupt critical ongoing and future peacekeeping collaboration and existing alliances.

Montgomery specifically welcomed advice from Washington on convention language that might make Articles 1(b) and 1(c) acceptable to the U.S. Government. End summary.

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Interoperability  
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¶2. (C) In a May 6 meeting with Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Political Director Rory Montgomery and DFA Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Director Alison Kelly (Ireland's former DCM in Washington), the DCM and POLOFFs delivered reftel demarche and raised the interoperability issue within the Oslo Process Convention text that was drafted in New Zealand in February 2008. Montgomery agreed that interoperability would be a critical issue during the Dublin Conference. He said there were some hard-line nations pushing for a total ban and there was "no prospect" of deleting Articles 1(b) and 1(c). He noted that the "like-minded" group of nations (including the UK, France, and Germany) recognized that the language in the articles was too broad, and that Ireland agreed.

¶3. (C) Saying that there were some interesting ideas being explored, Montgomery indicated that, as a compromise, Ireland would work to expand the language of Articles 1(b) and 1(c) so as to diminish the chance of unintended consequences -- especially among the group of nations that are undecided on what the final product should entail. He stated that, in spite of the rhetoric, there was a general desire among the subscribed nations not to have the Oslo Process disrupt critical ongoing and future peacekeeping collaboration and existing alliances. In particular, he said, Ireland, which is heavily involved in international peacekeeping operations,

would oppose criminalizing the use of cluster munitions.

¶4. (C) Montgomery acknowledged that there were broad gulfs between subscribing nations, saying that the challenge during the Dublin Conference would be to achieve a Cluster Munitions Convention that balances legitimate humanitarian concerns with the need to achieve broad consensus on the outcome, which necessarily would include the issue of interoperability.

¶5. (C) Montgomery went on to say that some nations have expressed confusion on the exact nature of the United States' concerns, noting that some NATO members, including Norway, disagree that the Oslo Process will cause interoperability problems. He said that specific examples and clarifications of U.S. concerns would be helpful. In addition, Montgomery noted that some States are openly speculating that the United States is hyping the interoperability issue in order to create insurmountable problems that would cause the collapse of the Oslo Process. He quickly clarified that Ireland did not subscribe to such speculation.

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Definitions  
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¶6. (C) Recognizing that newer weapons do not cause the same amount of collateral damage as older conventional weapons, Montgomery said that the definition of what constitutes a cluster munitions weapon would be another critical piece of the Oslo Process negotiations in Dublin. He indicated that these negotiations, which would focus on six or seven features of cluster munitions, would be difficult.

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¶7. (C) Significant compromises would be required, Montgomery said, in order to agree on criteria that must be met before a cluster munitions weapon would be exempt from being banned. In addition, he noted, some nations were pushing for a transition period, permitting States to wean themselves from certain weapons; though he wryly noted that each State has a different list of such weapons (depending on their current, expensive stockpiles) and that nations without stockpiles were among the strongest opponents of a transition period. Nonetheless, some weapons would be banned immediately, he predicted. The issue of retaining cluster munitions for testing and research would also be contentious, Montgomery thought.

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Assistance for Victims  
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¶8. (SBU) Montgomery did not anticipate much debate regarding victims' assistance, noting that subscribing nations agreed that such assistance was an ethical obligation. However, he noted that the issue of who should foot the bill for victims' assistance could become difficult, saying that a strong lobby exists for sending the bill to the nations using the weapons.

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Role of NGOs  
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¶9. (SBU) More than 300 NGO representatives are expected to be in Dublin during the Conference, Montgomery said. He noted that the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC), led by well-known, credible, and serious individuals, was ably coordinating NGO input as an umbrella organization. (Note: The CMC website is [www.stopclustermunitions.org](http://www.stopclustermunitions.org). End Note.) He also said that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) would be playing an important role, and that several international organizations, as well as some States that have not yet signed onto the Wellington Conference text, would observe.

¶10. (C) While Montgomery said he expected that opponents of cluster munitions will exert "huge pressure," he indicated that the Irish Government intended to keep a tight lid on such activities. Only a handful of NGOs will be allowed to observe the negotiations, he said, while the bulk of NGO activities will be kept away from Croke Park Conference Center, the location of the Conference. Kelly noted that, so far, the NGOs have been compliant with Irish Government rules, such as a ban on emotive posters of children who have been crippled by explosive remnants of war. Montgomery noted that the Government did not expect any large demonstrations.

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Public Affairs  
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¶11. (SBU) Montgomery said that he expects some negative media coverage during the event, although he thought that much of it would be aimed at moderate participants in the Conference, such as the "like-minded" group, and NATO countries in an effort to achieve a more hard-line Cluster Munitions Convention. He doubted that much energy would be expended in criticizing the absent U.S. Government -- at least during the conference. Montgomery noted that the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs has created a dedicated website for the Conference, which will be updated daily with the progress made at the Conference ([www.clustermunitiionsdublin.ie](http://www.clustermunitiionsdublin.ie)).

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Comment  
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¶12. (C) True to the Irish view of themselves in the world, Montgomery portrayed Ireland's intended role in the Conference as one of an honest broker striving for reasonable consensus. He is confident that a final Cluster Munitions Convention would come out of the Dublin Conference, ready to be signed in December 2008 in Oslo. We are convinced that the Irish will make a determined effort to achieve a workable consensus.

¶13. (C) In the meantime, however, Dermot Ahern, Ireland's Foreign Minister who was personally invested in the Oslo Process, is no longer the Foreign Minister. On May 8, newly

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elected Prime Minister Brian Cowen appointed Ahern to be Minister of Justice, Equality, and Law Reform. The new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Micheal Martin, is a newcomer to Foreign Affairs. There is no public record of Martin expressing his views on cluster munitions. Nonetheless, we do not expect the Irish view to change.

FOLEY